Characters

- JACK BENNY

  As close to what he is on TV/radio

- ROCHESTER

  And he is on TV/radio but with long hair, postuncletom

- DENNIS

  As close to what he is on TV/radio . . . highvoiced fag

- MARY

  TV/radio-dikey

- DON WILSON

  Big fat, robust, smiling, announcer . . . video TV/radio

Act

SCENE

BENNY'S HOUSE, WHICH IS ALSO SET FOR THE TV SHOW. BOOM MIKE HANGING.

JACK BENNY

(Comes out, begins to sing)

I'M SO PRETTY
AND SO GOOD
AND I DON'T WORK
FOR MY LIVELIHOOD
OH HOO HOO
OH HO HO
I'M A WHITE . . . CHRISTIAN!

(PAUSE, looks guilty)

Well . . . a recent convert, anyway.

(Cracks up . . . gets himself together, looks around)

Hey Rochester! Rochester! Where the hell is he? Rochester, for Christ's sake, I'm late as it is. I want the car. Rochester.

(Walks around, exasperated and pouting)

Rochester!

ROCHESTER

(Comes out, walking very fast, as if HE's going to walk through BENNY)

What the hell you want man? Don't be calling me all the time. Damn, can't never get away from you.

JACK BENNY

Rochester, what are you talking about? What kind of tone is that? I want my car, and I've been looking all over the place for you. Where've you been?

ROCHESTER

Man don't be asking me where I been. Do I ever ask you where you been?

JACK BENNY

You don't have to, you know already, you drive me everywhere I go.

ROCHESTER

You damn right I do!

JACK BENNY

Well I want to be driven somewhere, so let's go.

ROCHESTER

Damn. You always want me in with you. In your shitty little life. Why do I have to drive you? Why don't you drive me? What makes you think you should be driven anywhere? What're you God, or somebody hip like that?? Wow.

JACK BENNY

Rochester, don't talk so loud now.

ROCHESTER

Ahh man, what you want, let me hear it, so I can get outta here. I got a lotta things going don't have nothin' to do with you, and your little Jewish soul.

JACK BENNY

Rochester. What're you saying? Rochester, your hair, what happened to your grease job? Why's your hair so wooly?

ROCHESTER

What'a you mean . . . Why? Why in hell not? That's the way my hair is. Why's your hair so . . . ah, damn, you don't even got no hair.

(Making slapping motion as if slapping JACK'S bald head)

Pop!

(Makes rubbing motions)

Yeh. Now lemme rub it, jus' for luck.

JACK BENNY

Rochester, Rochester . . .

(Getting animated)

What's wrong with you? Why're you acting this way? You look weird.

ROCHESTER

You look pretty weird yourself. Look I don't have much time to be be wasting on you. Why'd you call me? Huh? Spit it out.

JACK BENNY

What? I've told you already why I called. What are you saying? Rochester, Rochester . . .

(In best JACK BENNY sardonic — humorous tone)

you work for me, remember? You're my chauffeur. You've been my chauffeur for thirty-five years.

ROCHESTER

What, I thought you were only thirty-five.

JACK BENNY

Thirty-nine! Rochester . . . enough nonsense now, I want to use the car. Now get it around the front. We've got to get out of here.

ROCHESTER

I'm not going to do any such thing. You wanna go somewhere you get the car out in front yourself, and drive it yourself. Why I have to go with you? You'll probably have a terrible accident in that car and kill yourself. And I don't dig that death scene. Completely tasteless.

JACK BENNY

Rochester, what's going on now . . . listen friend, I've humoured you all I'm going to. Now get that car in front . . .

(Gesturing with hands)

and get it out there now.

(Very emphatic)

ROCHESTER

(Takes menacing step quickly forward)

Whaaaaaaat? Who the hell you think you talkin' to punk? You can't beat nobody!

(Throws up his fists threatening)

You better watch your mouth sucker . . . I'll knock you through your knees.

JACK BENNY

Rochester, if you don't stop this foolishness at once, I'll have to sever our connection . . . that is by terminating your employment.

ROCHESTER

What I care?

JACK BENNY

(Looking quizzically, then recovering himself smirking)

What do you care? Ha . . . you'll care alright if I fire you, and you have to walk the street with no money. Nobody'll hire you. An old busted down bad chauffeur like you.

ROCHESTER

What I care about that? I got more important things to do than be around here wasting my life taking you to stupid ass places. I know I got more important things to do than sit in front of a car while you get drunk and pat some stale bitch's ass.

JACK BENNY

All right. Then you're fired. See what you can get with that attitude. My God, you must be going mad.

ROCHESTER

I'm saner than anybody in your family.

JACK BENNY

All right, then get out and scrounge around for yourself. Without me supporting you. See how you wind up! Hah. You'll be a bum, just like the rest of these . . .

ROCHESTER

What? These what?

JACK BENNY

These . . .

(Obviously embarrassed)

unfortunate Negro man.

ROCHESTER

Sounds like the name of a lodge. Unfortunate Negro Man Athletic and Social Club, Inc.

JACK BENNY

Laugh now . . . but you won't be laughing when your behind is hanging out.

ROCHESTER

What makes you think my behind is going to be hanging out . . . huh . . . will you let me know that???

JACK BENNY

What makes me think?? Hahaha . . .

(Shitty laugh)

well my chocolate friend, what are you gonna do for money? You'll not get any more of mine.

ROCHESTER

Chocolate friend, huh.

(Almost tiptoeing in an effect to restrain himself from attacking JACK)

Man next time you . . .

(Trails off getting better idea)

Oh, you don't think I'm gonna be getting any more of your money . . .

(laughs)

Why not? If you don't give it to me, all I have to do, is take it. Just reach in your pockets and pull it out. You can't do nothin' to stop me.

JACK BENNY

What? I'll call the police . . . if you continue this mad behaviour. Not only will you be out of a job . . . you'll also be off the streets for a healthy period.

ROCHESTER

(Balling up his fist)

Oh, yeh. I wish you would. I jus' wish you would . . . boy you'd really be in trouble.

JACK BENNY

(Getting a little worried)

Rochester, Rochester, what's come over you? Why're you talking to me like this? We've been together for too long. We're supposed to be . . . friends.

ROCHESTER

(Falls on the floor in a long obscene laugh . . . staggering up)

Wow . . . wow . . . wow . . . that's really something . . . what? Did you say that Mr˙ Benny or not? Friends?

JACK BENNY

Yes . . .

(Loud, then cracking into almost a whimper, as if HE was ashamed to say the word)

friends . . . at least, I'd always thought . . . I mean I never thought of you as just my chauffeur. You were always Rochester the man, my friend.

ROCHESTER

Your stone friend, huh?

JACK BENNY

That's right. Always . . .

(Growing quickly nostalgic)

as my friend . . . my friend, Rochester.

(Almost weeping)

ROCHESTER

(LEAPS up wringing his hands . . .)

Woooowheeee . . . woooo wheeee . . .

(Stops abruptly)

Woooowheee my ass. Friend. Damn, man what you talking about? If I'm all that much your friend, why am I the chauffeur. If we so tight, why're you the one with all the money, and I work for you?? That don't sound like friend, to me. Sounds just like a natural slave . . .

JACK BENNY

Now, wait a minute, don't blame your lowly state on me. I hustled for what I have, friend. You'd better do the same, instead of looking to me all the time.

ROCHESTER

Yeh, that's what I think.

JACK BENNY

Yes, and now, I'll have to ask you to leave. I'll just have to get along without the car tonight. Tomorrow I'll find another chauffeur who I can really become friendly with. My God, Rochester, thirty-five years of service of good work, and cheerfulness all shot and gone at once. How could you do such a thing?

ROCHESTER

Get outta my face!

JACK BENNY

No friend, you get out of my face. See how you make it by yourself. You'll be a Bowery bum in a few weeks. Then maybe you might even come crawling back for a job.

ROCHESTER

(Suddenly grabbing BENNY by the lapel)

I told you I didn't need to go for that bum bit, my man. I'll just take the money you got, and leave you.

JACK BENNY

Haa . . . you fool, you think I'd carry large sums of money around with me? We white people have banks, you know.

ROCHESTER

(Searching JACK BENNY quickly)

Banks, huh . . .

(Patting his pockets, pulls out JACK BENNY'S wallet . . . JACK BENNY winces)

Aha, no loot huh, what's this?

(Pulls out roll of bills . . .)

JACK BENNY

This is wrong Rochester. You're doing an evil thing. God will punish you for this.

ROCHESTER

Cut it out, Benny . . . you know you don't believe in God no more than a pile of rat doodoo.

JACK BENNY

OK, get out of my house. You took my money, what else you want???

ROCHESTER

(Counting money)

307, 308, 318, 318˙57 . . . not bad . . .not bad. That's pretty good for no money.

JACK BENNY

OK, now beat it Rochester, I mean it . . . I don't want to have to call the police. You'd better leave at once . . . and God have mercy on your soul.

ROCHESTER

Ah man shutup will you, before I swat you with the back of my hand.

(Pocketing money)

OK, pardner, Mr˙ Benny, etcetera, I got the chicken feed, now where's the real money?

JACK BENNY

Now you get out of here, you cheap crook. You got all my money now why don't you go back to your horrible life.

ROCHESTER

Horrible? Haa . . . wow, look man even driving your freakin' car, I could still groove myself when I wanted to.

(Music of jerk plays, Rochester does a few movements of the dance, popping his fingers, happy with himself . . . draws up short)

. . . Shiiiit. You don't know nothin' about my life. But I know all about yours. Driving your stinking broken down pennypinchin' short I found out all about your hopeless life, brother. Wait a minute, you ain't my brother. Ha, you must be Mack. That cat that people talk to in gas stations and train stations, maybe they're carrying the baggage, and a cat like you comes up and says, Hey Mack. Well that's what I'm saying to you now . . . Hey Mack! Where the hell's the rest of your bucks . . . your dough, my man.

JACK BENNY

You took all I had. Jesus. What more do you want?

ROCHESTER

I want *everything* you got except the nasty parts. The stupidity.

JACK BENNY

(Pulls up short)

What? Now you see here, Rochester. You you chauffeur. Get out of my house at once.

(Pointing to the door. ROCHESTER takes JACK BENNY'S arm and throws it down to his side)

I don't want to have to lose my temper.

ROCHESTER

Man, I wish you would lose your temper. Huh . . . you lose your temper, you'll lose a piece of your behind. Now, where's that jack, Jack?

JACK BENNY

(Cowering and stuttering)

Please, please Rochester . . . now you're kidding . . . huh . . . you don't want to take . . . I mean, I told you that's all the money I have

(Trying to draw some strength)

Rochester . . .

(Moving closer in last attempt)

Rochester do you think I would lie to you???

ROCHESTER

(Steps back disbelieving)

Whaaat?

(Raises hand as if to strike JACK BENNY again)

Man, you better quit bullshittin' and run out them dollars. Or I'll smash your crooked ass.

JACK BENNY

(Beginning to get hysterical at the prospect . . . but trying to hold it in)

Rochester. Please don't talk to me like that. I'm your employer. Rochester.

ROCHESTER

I'm fired, remember. I should go back to my horrible life, remember??? Well, I'm going back to my horrible life all right,

(Does quick jerk step)

but I'm gonna take all your loot and whatnot with me. Believe that.

(Steps close, menacing)

Now where's the gold, man . . . you holding me up . . .

(Grabs JACK BENNY)

hear? Where is that money, my man, I know you got plenty more where this came from . . . and not in no goddamn bank . . . now you better quit stalling and lead me to that gold.

JACK BENNY

Rochester! Rochester!

(Rochester lifts him off his feet by the collar)

ROCHESTER

Talk, turkey!

JACK BENNY

No, no Rochester, please, there is no more, please, Rochester . . . don't hurt me, please . . . I tell you there is no more money, please believe me . . . taxes, taxes, that's where it all went to. Taxes, please . . . Rochester . . .

(Pulls away, and back against wall, bumps into large painting hanging on wall. Spread arms when HE realizes he has bumped into it)

Ohhh.

ROCHESTER

Aha, so you got some kind of safe behind that picture. Just like in movie rich people's houses.

JACK BENNY

No,

(Tries to laugh, but feebly)

No, haaa . . .

ROCHESTER

OK, move it.

JACK BENNY

No.

ROCHESTER

Move it, goddamit.

JACK BENNY

No, please, there's nothing here . . . go away.

(ROCHESTER grabs JACK BENNY again and tosses him out of the way. JACK BENNY is moaning and struggling. ROCHESTER lifts painting off the wall. There is a wall safe behind it.)

No, no . . . there's nothing in there, nothing.

ROCHESTER

Yeh, yeh . . . well if there's nothing in it, then you shouldn't be afraid to have it opened. How you open this man? Come on now.

JACK BENNY

I don't know.

ROCHESTER

(moves swiftly to his pocket, whips out his trusty razor, flinging out the blade on the way up . . .)

Maaan, don't be playin' with me. Open this thing.

JACK BENNY

No.

(ROCHESTER RAISES ARM. Leaping up)

Allright, allright . . . you you savage . . .

ROCHESTER

(whips razor through air cutting JACK BENNY'S coat)

I'll savage you allright.

JACK BENNY

Awwk . . . OK OK, I'm opening it . . . please . . .

(Begins to twist dials of safe . . . stops once, reluctant to continue . . . but ROCHESTER waves razor in his face again)

ROCHESTER

Maaan, don't you slow down no more.

(JACK BENNY swings door open slowly, when he does piles of bills tumble out onto floor)

JACK BENNY

(Begins weeping inconsolably)

Ohhhh, Ohhhh, my money . . . my beautiful money.

(Suddenly despair turns into savage anger)

Goddamit get your black hands off my beautiful money . . . get them off.

(Begins pulling on ROCHESTER, ROCHESTER backhands him, knocking him to the floor. JACK BENNY is sprawled on the floor kicking his feet up and down like a hysterical child)

My money . . . Please . . . Please . . . don't take my money . . . Please . . .

(ROCHESTER is now scooping money into a shopping bag. Doing a little of the jerk as he moves. Humming a few words. JACK BENNY is still moaning and weeping.

Beginning to compromise in his despair. Looking up, wheedling . . .)

Well, just don't take it all. That's all. Leave me some Rochester, please. You can't just leave me destitute. Please just a little tiny bit. Just a few thousand dollar bills. Please Rochester.

ROCHESTER

Shutup, creep. How'd you get all this loot in the first place?

JACK BENNY

I worked hard for that money boy . . . and don't you forget it.

ROCHESTER

Another boy come out of your mouth, you're gonna see permanent stars, JB.

JACK BENNY

But I worked hard for this money . . . you know that?

ROCHESTER

What you own, one of them appliance stores on 125th Street??

JACK BENNY

Ohh, that's just one of my interests.

ROCHESTER

Yeh, you own a few butcher stores and stuff too. Prices ten cents higher than downtown too.

JACK BENNY

Look, I'm not there, I don't control the policies. I'm a comedian, an *artist*. You know that. We've been together for years.

ROCHESTER

Yeh, I know . . . that's why I'm getting my back pay right now . . what they call severance pay . . .

(Grinning)

bossss.

(Still stuffing money in bag, sweeping out inside of safe with his hand, and a few jewels, etc˙ come out, finally a human skull with a tiara still attached to it, is swept out . . . ROCHESTER jumps)

Goddam whassthat?

JACK BENNY

(Begins howling with laughter)

Hahahaha . . . scared you didn't it . . . I forgot how scary you people are.

ROCHESTER

(Throws skull out of his hands, BENNY catches it)

Yeh. I don't like no human skulls in my bedroom, that's for sure. But you so used to murdering people, and cutting their throats for your simple assed pleasure, you don't mind dead people piled up to the ceiling. You wanted me to leave you some of your loot, well you got it.

(Reaches over, lifts the tiara off the skull, drops it in his bag)

You got it Stein . . . cash it in the U˙S˙ Treasury. They got plenty skulls in there I'm certain.

JACK BENNY

Rochester . . . no . . . Rochester you've left me nothing. Please man, have some feeling for another human being. Please.

ROCHESTER

Talk to your toy, girl. Since when you start being a human being. Huh?

JACK BENNY

Rochester.

(Changes to anger again)

OK, damn you, you got all my money . . . MY, MY money . . . now get out . . . like I said, go back to your shitty little life, you illiterate swine.

ROCHESTER

(Swats him across the head again. Laughing)

Ha . . . I bet this really burns your li'l hiney up don't it. Haha . . .

(Rubbing his head)

don't it???

JACK BENNY

Stop it, and get out of here. Stop it.

ROCHESTER

And you talking about my shitty li'l life, man I tol' you you don't know nothin' about my life.

(Quick jerk)

What I do, or think. Except you might know a little something about what I really think of you . . . ha ha, now. But I watch all your little white nasty sterile bullshit imitation life all the time. Drivin' your car. Or lookin' at the TV.

(Laughs)

Wow. That's where you really show up, my man. That evil tube. All I have to do is sit around and watch The Guiding Light or The Donna Reed Show or Peyton Place, or one of those things, and I find out all about your shallow little lives, and your ugly little needs. Jesus Christ, man, you some sick type folks. Wow. The Man From Uncle! And all that James Bond type action. Cats walking around blasting people's heads off all over the world . . . and for what?? Huh, just so you can look at somebody with your skinny hook nose turned up in the air and scream Rochester!

(Imitating him)

Rochester! I want the car. I know all about your life, my man, and if I was you, or any of them people look like you, I'd stick a shot gun in my mouth.

JACK BENNY

Please leave now. Must you insult me too? You've taken everything I have.

ROCHESTER

Not quite.

JACK BENNY

Not quite? What're you talking about? What else is there?

ROCHESTER

Your life.

JACK BENNY

What?

(Getting genuinely frightened, backing away)

You're crazy . . . you're out of your mind . . . get out of here . . .

(Shouting)

Get out!

ROCHESTER

(Begins to laugh, laughing so hard, he slaps his hip)

Hahahaha . . . thass right your life, my man, your wasted little life, as messed up as it is . . . you still want to save it. Huh, you ought to thank me for knocking you off, sparing you the agony of having to stay alive and be so messed up.

JACK BENNY

You're crazy . . . crazy . . .

(At this point highvoiced male singing is heard outside the door. Door swings open and Dennis Day swishes in)

DENNIS

Hello Jack . . . Rochester . . .

JACK BENNY

(Rushing toward DENNIS)

Oh, Dennis, Dennis, thank God, Rochester's gone crazy. He's taking all my money, and now he wants to kill me. He's gone out of his mind, Dennis.

DENNIS

What? Oh . . .

(Starting to laugh)

Mr˙ Benny, Hahahahaha, Mr˙ Benny, wow, I forgot what a funny man you are. Always on the stage eh, Mr˙ Benny?

ROCHESTER

(Laughing)

Hahaha, you see, Mr˙ Benny, I told you you couldn't fool Dennis. I knew he'd catch on to that bit right away.

JACK BENNY

Dennis . . .

(Almost Shrieking)

It's not a bit. Rochester's gone crazy. Look. Look in that bag. He's taking all my money. And he said he wanted to take my life too.

DENNIS

Oh, Mr˙ Benny, I'm not going to fall for that. I look in that bag and you'll fall down on the floor telling me what a sucker I am.

JACK BENNY

No, no Dennis, it's not a joke. It's true. Look at Rochester. You never saw him look like that before did you? All that bushy hair. Look at his horrible eyes. How hard they've gotten . . . and cold. It's no joke Dennis, Rochester, our own dear Rochester, has become a mad thief and murderer.

DENNIS

(Really starts laughing hard)

Oh, Mr˙ Benny, you're too much. You could be in the movies. You probably made Rochester put on crazynigger makeup, just to fool me.

JACK BENNY

Dennis, Dennis, will you listen to me please . . .

ROCHESTER

(Howling with laughter, but making sure DENNIS can't get at the bag)

You see, Mr˙ Benny, I told you, Dennis was too smart for you. Hahaahaa.

JACK BENNY

Shutup, you, just shutup and give me back my money.

DENNIS

(Laughing, looking at his watch)

Shall I sing, Mr˙ Benny? It's time for my song.

JACK BENNY

Sing? You crazy fool. Rochester's gone crazy and taken all my money and all you can think of to do is sing one of those dumb songs of yours. Get the hell out of here.

DENNIS

But, Mr˙ Benny, you pay me to sing, remember? I've got the greatest tenor voice this side of Dublin.

ROCHESTER

Tenor. Sound more like a weeping soprano to me.

DENNIS

(Beginning to sing . . .)

"When Irish eyes are smiling, it's like a breath of spring, when Irish eyes are smiling . . ."

JACK BENNY

(Rushing over and grabbing DENNIS by the throat)

You stupid little queen, why don't you listen to me?

(While he's singing Rochester lifts his coat and picks his pocket. Looks in the wallet, then tosses the whole thing in his bag. Then he joins in song with Dennis who is still trying to sing, and elude Jack Benny at same time)

Get out, both of you, get out and leave me alone. I mean it now. Get out of here.

DENNIS

But Mr˙ Benny . . .

(Looking at his watch)

We still have about fourteen minutes on the air. And I'm scheduled to sing now.

(Still avoiding Jack Benny who is trying to grab him. Rochester is howling with laughter, still singing snatches of "When Irish Eyes are Smiling . . .")

JACK BENNY

And you shut up . . .

(To Rochester)

Shut up you crazy coon. . . . I'll call the police if you don't get out of here. You've taken everything I value in the world.

(Now there's another knock at the door)

Oh, God, now who's that?

DENNIS

Who's that . . . whatta you talking about Mr˙ Benny . . . you know who it is . . . you read the script just like everybody else.

JACK BENNY

Will you shutup Dennis?

MARY

(Calling from outside, as she knocks then pushing the door open and coming in)

Jack?

(Coming in)

Hello gang. Jack. Wow what's happening in here? You people look like you been running a track meet. What's going on Jack?

JACK BENNY

Ahh

(Running over to greet her)

at last, Mary, a sane person at last. Mary, Mary, Rochester's gone crazy. He took all my money and says he wants to murder me.

MARY

(Sarcastically)

Aww, Jack, come on. What's wrong with you today?

JACK BENNY

No please Mary . . . this is no time to be unbelieving. Look at Rochester.

(Rochester and Dennis break out in laughter, or rather Rochester leads the laughter and Dennis follows, not wanting to be left out of the "joke")

MARY

Ohh, so you're trying to put me on again . . . I never heard that line at the rehearsals. Wow, Jack, you're

freelancing again??

JACK BENNY

No, Mary, this is not the script. This is reality. Rochester is some kind of crazy nigger now. He's changed. He wants everything.

MARY

Oh, Jack, cut it out.

DENNIS

Yeh, Mr˙ Benny, that line is getting pretty stale now, don't you think. And besides, it's long past for my song.

(Jack Benny reaches over and tries to slap Dennis)

ROCHESTER

Mr˙ Benny, Mr˙ Benny, what's the trouble with you? That's not in the script.

(He makes gesture indicating Jack Benny is crazy)

Calm down now.

DENNIS

Yeh, what's wrong with you Mr˙ Benny? You jealous because it's time for me to sing. Can you beat that Mary, Mr˙ Benny doesn't want me to sing.

MARY

Jack I don't know what's come over you, but I hope the sponsor doesn't mind. None of this business was in the approved script.

JACK BENNY

(Wheedling to Mary again)

Please Mary you've got to believe me. Forget what that dimwitted Dennis says. He doesn't know a damn thing.

MARY

Oh, Jack . . .

JACK BENNY

(Getting very animated, hysterical . . .)

Well if you all won't believe me you're in danger . . . then I'll have to save us myself . . .

(He turns and leaps to throw himself on Rochester . . . Rochester dodges him, and he falls heavily to the floor knocking himself out. Rochester howls, then cools it down a little to look the least bit sympathetic and

concerned)

ROCHESTER

Gee whiz

(Very affected happy nigger talk)

I wonder what's wrong with Mr˙ Benny. Maybe we ought to take him to see one of them weird doctors. Maybe his wig needs straightening.

MARY

Mr˙ Benny doesn't wear a wig.

ROCHESTER

Err . . . I meant his head.

MARY

Ummmm, you know Rochester you do look pretty strange, and come to think of it, you sound pretty strange too. What's in that bag you've got there?

(Suddenly turning to DENNIS)

Dennis, Dennis, suppose Jack wasn't faking? Suppose Rochester . . .

(Voice breaks, she kneels besides Jack Benny's body)

Jack, Jack, wake up!

Dennis loses his mirth. Turns even paler. He had been readying himself to sing once Benny had knocked himself out, with scales, spraying his throat, taking his singer's stance, etc˙ But then he turns very frightened to look at Rochester)

DENNIS

(Approaching Rochester very cautiously)

Rochester, Rochester, . . . was Mr˙ Benny really faking . . . or . . . or . . .

(Rochester throws his head back with laughter)

Rochester, stop laughing and answer me.

(Rasing his voice, to try to get a sharp note into it. When he does this Rochester stops laughing immediately and glowers at him)

Uhh, please . . . Rochester please answer me.

ROCHESTER

(Starts laughing again)

No, Dennis, haha, ol' JB wasn't faking. He was telling you the truth, the stone truth.

(Laughs, voice has already changed into the tone and quality it was when he was talking to Jack Benny earlier)

MARY

(Getting up from her knees and moving toward Dennis cautiously. They clutch each other, shaking. Dennis lets out a howl of fear, shaking in his shoes. Mary is trying to comfort him, and cool her own fright out at the same time)

Then Jack *was* telling the truth.

(Rochester shakes his head in the affirmative. Immensely amused)

DENNIS

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO . . .

MARY

Dennis, be quiet, you sound like an old lady.

DENNIS

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO . . . a crazy coon . . . he's he's lia — liable to mur-mur-mur . . . kill us, M-Mary!

(Squeezing behind her, shaking like a leaf)

MARY

And you have all of Jack's money in that bag?

(Rochester nods yes)

And you're going to take it all. Not leave a single thousand dollar bill??

ROCHESTER

Thass right, kitten.

(Gets heavy rape/seducer tone. Mary begins to try to get behind Dennis)

Not even a single . . . thousand dollar bill . . .

(Reaches inside his coat, pulls out bottle of tb, takes a little swig . . .)

Whatta you two got to take?

(To Dennis)

Oh, I already took yours, golden soprano . . . ha ha . . . whatta you got . . . that I need li'l lady?

(To Mary)

MARY

I'm a pauper, Rochester, you know that . . . everything I have I got from Jack.

ROCHESTER

Everything?

(He begins to move forward)

Must be something you got on your own.

DENNIS

N-Now Ro-Rochester, please . . . don't continue like this . . . you make me nervous.

MARY

Dennis, Dennis, you've got to protect me. I . . . I think he wants to . . .

DENNIS

(Trying to get some strength in his voice)

Now you see here.

(Voice breaks)

Roch-ester.

(Gestures with no sound. Shaking his finger at Rochester, but then realizes the stupidity of the scene, and drops his hand)

ROCHESTER

Yeh, nasty mama, I know you got something I need. And I think I'm gonna take it, right now . . .

MARY

Rochester, Dennis, Dennis . . . do something . . . Jack! Please get up and save me . . .

ROCHESTER

(Drawing closer)

Yeh, I know you got somethin' I need . . . right up between them nasty thighs . . . and it's me for takin' it . . . right now.

(He grabs at Mary, and Dennis falls to the floor, fainted dead away)

DENNIS

Ooooooooooooooooooo.

MARY

Rochester, . . . Rochester, don't you do this . . . You can't just *take* me . . . against my will . . .

(She closes her eyes, pretending to struggle, but she opens her arms and leans against Rochester immobile)

You can't be so *cruel!*

ROCHESTER

(As Mary flings open her arms, Rochester reaches very quickly up under her skirt)

There it is!

(Mary, when Rochester's hand first sweeps under her clothes, gives a little sigh of pleasure . . . but then she lets out a horrified shriek, and her eyes come open as Rochester withdraws his hand holding up a leather money pouch)

Haaaaaa! I knew you had a whole lotta useful merchandise up there!

(Opens bag, starts counting money)

MARY

Oh, oh, you . . . you . . . rapist.

ROCHESTER

Never touched you.

MARY

You fiend. You . . . you . . .

(She faints on top of Dennis)

ROCHESTER

(Counting the money and beginning to do a little of the Jerk)

Ooh, Ooh, Ooh, Baby, Rich white lady/on the floor/you gave me your money, have you got any more?/yeh . . . yeh . . . Ooh . . . Ooh.

(Another knock at the door. Rochester ducks behind the curtain. Don Wilson is knocking calls:)

DON WILSON

Jack . . . Jack . . .

(Comes in)

Hello everybody. Jesus X Christopher . . . what happened in this place? Mary, Dennis . . .

(Trying to arouse them)

Jack . . . my goodness, what's happened? Is this business in the script?

(Pulls script out of his coat . . . scans it . . . looks up, smiles at audience, big announcer smile. Looks nervously at pile of bodies, tries to make them stir with his foot, while smiling big teeth at the audience. Looks nervously at watch. Half mumbling to himself)

Jeez. None of this stuff in the script. Almost time for my announcement.

(Looks around . . . pleads)

Jack . . . Mary . . . Dennis, please get up and say see you next week to the audience. You're supposed to, before the commercial. The spon-sor . . . won't like this. Please Jack. This is art for art's sake you're pulling, and nobody goes for that jazz anymore.

(Disgustedly)

Oh, well. I guess I'll have to just give my bit.

(Pulls himself up to his fullfat height)

Ladies and Gentlemen, The Benny Show has been brought to you by J-E-L-L-O, Jello, America's favorite dessert. Remember, it comes in five delicious flavors, Raspberry, Orange, Cherry, Lemon and Lime. Kids adore it. Remember J-E-L-L-O.

(Big dripping voice)

America's FAVORITE DESSERT. YOU'LL LOVE IT!

(Laughs in big fat jocular manner)

The Jack Benny Show will come to you next week same time, same station. We'll be looking for you.

(Waves, makes a little bow, then straightens up and stops smiles, as some technician had given out sign signifying end of show . . . Now Rochester sneaks out quickly from behind the curtain and slaps Don Wilson on the back of the head. He falls back, near the pile of others.

Rochester comes over, and begins going through Don's clothes. He pulls out a few Jello boxes of all descriptions)

ROCHESTER

Raspberry,

(Throws it over his shoulder)

Lemon, etcetera, Lime, Man, Fuck Jello. Where's the loot?

(Finally finds money bag, tied in Jello bag)

Yeh, yeh . . . all this dough these paddies got.

(Laughs. Sticks money in his bag. Starts humming same tune. Now there is a car horn sounding, insistently. Rochester goes over to the door, opens it, calls out:)

OK, baby, I'll be right there. Start the motor running . . . I'll be down in a minute.

(Kneels to get rest of money, puts bag on his shoulder, gets up to go. Walks over to the bodies, kneels slightly and begins to laugh)

Goodbye Mr˙ Wilson, Goodbye Mr˙ Day, Goodbye Miss Livingston, Goodbye Mr˙ Benny. The program's over. I leave you to your horrible lives!

(Howls with laughter, does a little jerk step, exits.)

(Three piano chords designating change of program)

. .BLACK. .

(CURTAIN)